Why Redesign the Army?

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The United States Army is undertaking a complete organizational redesign of its combat and associated support units in the midst of the Global War on Terror (GWOT) to better meet current and future operational requirements. This redesign to a modular Unit of Action creates a more capable and lethal reconnaissance squadron that will increase the overall lethality of the force. The effort, as well as the associated restructuring and stabilization initiatives, are deemed important by proponents as they are intended to sustain both the active and reserve Army through a potentially long term, manpower and resource intensive war on terror.

Within this design is the reorganization of all the light and heavy ground maneuver brigades to Unit(s) of Action (UA). Each UA consists of two maneuver battalions, a support battalion, and a Recon, Surveillance, Targeting, and Acquisition (RSTA) Squadron. The overall issue facing this Army reorganization is the necessity of such a radical redesign of the Branch in order to be modular and more mobile to operate in the current GWOT.

The focus of this paper is the design of the reconnaissance element with in the UA. Given the current task organization and role of brigade and battalion level reconnaissance, the RSTA Squadron provides a substantial increase in the ability of ground combat units to gain intelligence and protect the force. The discussion will include the redesign of the Army, the proposed modular Army, current reconnaissance in the Army, RSTA in the Unit of Action, and the advantages of a RSTA squadron over current recon.

WHY REDESIGN THE ARMY

In what the Army describes as the "most significant Army restructuring in the past 50 years,"[1] the Army intends to redesign its current ten active duty division force to a 43 to 48 brigade level UA force by FY2007[2]. The Army National Guard will also redesign its force structure in a similar fashion. While the Army cites the need for a more responsive, deployable, joint, and expeditionary force, others suggest that the primary reason for redesign is the ever-increasing long-term troop requirements to support the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT). The addition of up to 15 additional active duty and an undetermined number of Army National Guard brigade-sized UAs as a result of this redesign is intended to provide an additional force pool of deployable units to ease the burden on units presently deployed, and possibly to shorten the length of time that units are deployed on operations.[3]

Of the active Army's current 34 brigades, approximately 22 of these brigades are currently deployed on operations. "Recent Department of Defense (DOD) announcements and press reports that a brigade task force from the 2nd Infantry Division in Korea and the Opposing Force Unit from the Army's National Training Center at Ft. Irwin, California, the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment, will also be deployed, will raise the number of deployed brigades even higher"[4]. Some experts cite the deployment of these two particular units, which in the past had not been considered part of the

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[1] Andrew Feickert, "U.S. Army's Modular Redesign: Issues for Congress," *CRS Report for Congress*, Volume 1, July 19, 2004, 2.
[2] Feickert, 2.
[3] Feickert, 3.
[4] Feickert, 4.

deployable Army, as further evidence that the Army has almost exhausted its pool of active duty units available to fulfill the Army's commitments.[5]

THE PROPOSED MODULAR ARMY

What Will the Brigade Units of Action Look Like?

The Army describes their proposed brigade UAs as smaller and more lethal than current brigades and it would benefit from having division-level artillery and reconnaissance (RSTA) assets, as well as some assets from corps level as part of its organic structure. UAs could also receive an Army aviation package from redesigned aviation units of action if the mission requires the assets. Based on Army published briefings and discussions within the Army Staff, the following paragraphs will provide a brief overview of what the ground combat brigade UAs will look like.

Armored UA.

The Army envisions developing 20 to 22 Armored UAs in the active Army by 2007. In addition, the Army also plans to develop up to ten National Guard Armored UAs. At present, each Armored UA is planned to consist of approximately 3,800 soldiers, and will consist of the following subordinate units:

- One Brigade Troop Battalion including the UA staff; military police (MP) and security platoons; a signal company; a military intelligence company; and a joint

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[5] Feickert, 5.

fire coordination cell (to coordinate Air Force, Navy, and Marine Corps fires in support of the UA);

- One Armed Reconnaissance Battalion (RSTA) consisting of three reconnaissance troops and one surveillance troop and a forward support company;

- Two Combined Arms Battalions with two tank companies and two mechanized infantry companies in each battalion as well as an engineer and a forward support company each;

- One Fires Battalion consisting of a target acquisition cell, and two batteries of self-propelled artillery and a forward support company;

- One Support Battalion.

All of these subordinate units are intended to be linked with a networked battle command system designed to enhance situational and terrain awareness, transmit orders and reports, and exchange other mission-related items of information. This battle command system is not only intended to permit the UA to operate independently, but also to plug directly into other U.S. forces.[6]

Infantry UA.

The Army plans to form between 20 to 22 active Army Infantry UAs and five Army National Guard UAs by 2007. There will be basic Infantry UA design, although these units may be delivered by parachute or helicopter based on mission requirements. The Infantry UAs will consist of approximately 3,000 soldiers and will consist of the following subordinate units:

- One Brigade Troop Battalion including the UA staff; a military police (MP) platoon; a signal company; an intelligence company, an engineer company; and a joint fires cell;

- One Reconnaissance, Surveillance, and Target Acquisition (RSTA) Battalion with both motorized and dismounted reconnaissance units, a surveillance unit including ground radars, sensors, and unmanned aerial vehicles; and a forward support company;

- Two Infantry Battalions consisting of three rifle companies and one combat support company each; and a forward support company capable of moving one company by truck;

- One Strike Battalion consisting of a target acquisition platoon, an unmanned aerial vehicle unit, and two batteries of towed artillery; a forward support company;

- One Support Battalion consisting of a transport platoon capable of moving almost an entire infantry battalion by truck.

Like the Armored UA, the Infantry UA will also be reconnaissance heavy, equipped with a network battle command system, and will also receive augmentation from an Aviation UA when the mission dictates. Because the Infantry UAs lack the organic ground transport found in the Armored UAs, aviation augmentation will likely play a crucial role in providing the Infantry UAs with rapid battlefield mobility.[7]

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[6] Feickert, 9.

Stryker Brigade Combat Teams (SBCTs).

The Army plans to activate five active Army SBCTs by FY2007 and one National Guard SBCT by 2010. The first SBCT, 3rd Brigade of the 2nd Infantry Division, is presently deployed to Iraq and the second SBCT, 1st Brigade of the 25th Infantry Division, has recently completed its certification training. The overall SBCT organizational design and fielding schedule has changed little since established by General Shinseki (Army CoS, 2000-2003). The SBCTs consist of approximately 4,000 soldiers and are organized as follows:

- A headquarters company, a signal company, and a military intelligence company;

- Three Stryker Motorized Infantry Battalions with one headquarters and three Stryker motorized infantry companies each;

- A Reconnaissance and Surveillance Battalion;

- An Artillery Battalion;

- An engineer company;

- An anti-tank company; and

- A Support Battalion.

Like the Armored and Infantry UAs, the SBCT will also be equipped with a network battle command system and will also receive augmentation from an Aviation UA when the mission dictates. The SBCT is considered a medium force by the Army,

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[7] Feickert, 10.

designed to capitalize on its speed and situational awareness provided by an array of sensors in a variety of roles.[8]

THE ARMY'S CURRENT RECONNASSAINSE

The primary source of battle space intelligence for the Army's current Mechanized Division and Brigade Combat Team is the Division Cavalry Squadron (DIVCAV), the Armored Cavalry Regiment (ACR), the Brigade Reconnaissance Troop (BRT), and the Battalion level Scout Platoon (BLSP). The methods by which these elements are deployed are specific to the organic unit's mission and their primary focus is the enemy's capability, composition, and disposition.

Division Cavalry and Armored Cavalry Regiments.

The DIVCAV and ACR are made up of four Heavy Cavalry Troops per Squadron. The Troops composition consists of six officers and 126 enlisted soldiers. The Troops are organized in a headquarters section, two scout platoons, two tank platoons, a mortar section, and a maintenance section.[9] The Divisional Cavalry Squadron is organic to a particular maneuver division and the Armored Cavalry Regiment is independent and can be assigned to a maneuver division or brigade task force. Both operate missions in support of maneuver divisions, from the division's line of departure up to 72 hours out and gain information that is pushed down to line companies. This allows for the independent movement to conduct reconnaissance missions, security missions, and economy-of-force roles, while retaining enough combat power to maintain

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[8] Feickert, 11.

speed, tempo, and survive. There are currently six Cavalry Regiments active in today's Army.

The Brigade Reconnaissance Troop (or Team).

The BRT is made up of a headquarters section, two HMMWV platoons, and a maintenance section, with four officers and 59 enlisted.[10] The BRT is organic to a Mechanized Brigade Combat Team, operates 24-48 hours out from the units line of departure, and can perform route, zone, area, and limited security missions.[11] The BRT's direct fire capability is limited to small arms and does not have the protection of the DIVCAV or ACR. However, it has speed, sustainability, flexibility, and is directly responsive to the Brigades maneuver companies.

The Battalion Level Scout Platoon.

The BLSP consists of six HMMWV's with one officer and 23 enlisted soldiers. The BLSP is organic to the Mechanized Battalion, Squadron, or Task Force.[12] The BLSP operates not more than 24 hours out from the Battalion's line of departure and performs route, area, and limited zone and security operations.[13] Like the BRT, it is limited to small arms for direct fire, lacks adequate protection against an armored threat, and has speed and flexibility to react and maintain momentum.

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[9] FM 17-97, The Cavalry Troop, *Headquarters, The Department of the Army*, October 1995, 1, 1-3.
[10] FM 17-97, 1, 3-4.
[11] FM 17-97, 1, 16-18.
[12] FM 17-98, Scout Platoon, *Headquarters, The Department of the Army*, September 1994, 1, 1-5
[13] FM 17-98, 5, 1-8.

The current state of Army ground reconnainance has speed, flexibility, and firepower, but not every unit posses all three. Providing the commanders real-time intelligence so they can fight on the battlefield without any limitations is the overall goal. Units possessing firepower, protection, communication links, and the ability to sustain themselves for prolonged periods of time obtain this.

RSTA IN THE UNIT OF ACTION

The primary source of battle space intelligence for the Army's proposed Interim Brigade Combat Team (BCT), or UAs, is the Reconnaissance, Surveillance and Target Acquisition (RSTA) Squadron. "The fundamental role of the RSTA Squadron is to provide detailed situational understanding to the UA Commander facilitating freedom of maneuver and the concentration of combat power at the decisive time and place".[14] This is achieved in a continious-operating environment (no limits of time applied to the unit), based on the unit's ability to sustain itself, and with the technologically advanced systems, it will substantially enhance RSTA Squadron operations. The RSTA Squadron will have 72 M2 Bradleys or Strykers with 80 soldiers in each Troop. Among the proposed systems in the Squadron is the Future Scout and Cavalry System (FSCS), tactical unmanned aerial vehicles (TUAV), ground-based networked sensors (acoustic, seismic, magnetic, infrared, radio frequency), radio frequency (RF) detectors, and nuclear, biological and chemical (NBC) reconnaissance systems.[15] Only the FSCS exists in the current reconnaissance elements based on the mission being executed.

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[14] Global Security, "Brigade Unit of Action", http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/agency/army/bua.htm.
[15] Feickert, 22.

RSTA Squadron concept

Recent analysis has demonstrated that situational understanding is the fundamental force enabler across all BCT battlefield operating systems and the foundation for risk mitigation with respect to BCT vulnerabilities.[16] Given the current operating environment in the GWOT, the BCT must have the capability to achieve information superiority and deny an adversary the ability to achieve surprise or to template the force and engage it effectively. "The BCT will employ a multi-level, integrated suite of intelligence, reconnaissance, and surveillance (ISR) capabilities to develop and disseminate a common operational picture throughout the force, achieving situational understanding (SU) through the application of the commander's judgment and experience".[17] This capability is to be provided by the Reconnaissance, Surveillance, and Target Acquisition (RSTA) Squadron.

The RSTA Squadron is the essential building block capability required to achieve SU, including an in-depth understanding of the tactical and operational non-military factors that influence operations within an asymmetric environment.[18] SU and information superiority enable the BCT to avoid surprise, develop rapid decisions, control the time and place to engage in combat, conduct precision maneuver, shape the battle space with precision fires and effects, and achieve decisive outcomes.

"The RSTA Squadron will support SU of the operational environment in all its dimensions—political, cultural, economic, demographic, as well as military factors—

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[16] Feickert, 28.

[17] U.S. Department of Defense, Transformation: Modular Army Brigades Prepare for Deployment, http://www.defenselink.mil/transformation/articles/2004-11/ta112204e.html.

rather than a narrow focus on the adversary and his capabilities".[19] This multi-dimensional reconnaissance requirement means that RSTA elements must promote understanding of not just what is happening, but why. The squadron's efforts will likely be complemented by direct access to intelligence and information sources outside the BCT focused by the intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) integration and management elements at the BCT level. "In an asymmetric environment, identifying enemy centers of gravity (COG), decisive points, and the means to influence enemy will and behavior are critical contributions that the squadron can make to the BCT success".[20] RSTA efforts to assess the actual effects of BCT and joint battlefield operations are also important. "The squadron's ability to confirm intelligence viewed or acquired by strategic and operational assessment tools is paramount".[21] Data and SU developed at brigade, division, and corps levels must be available and leveraged by the BCT.

SUMMARY: THE ADVANTAGES OF THE RSTA SQUADRON OVER CURRENT ARMY RECCONASSAINSE

When comparing the RSTA Squadron to the current Army recon, we must look at the composition (troops and equipment), the capabilities (what can it do), and projection (where it can go and how fast can it get there).

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[18] Ibid.
[19] Ibid
[20] Global Security.
[21] Ibid

Composition.

Current recon is equipped with the M2 Bradley and the M998 HMMWV with a minimum of four to five soldiers on each vehicle. This capability gives recon units good speed and flexibility, moderate to minimum protection to direct and indirect fires, and the ability to dismount soldiers to gain vantage points and observe any adversary, which exists. The FSCS is integrated into a majority of the units, which gives them the ability to maintain good SU and sustain adequate lines of communication (LOC) when conducting reconnaissance missions. Unfortunately, the current task organization limits the amount of assets dedicated to the mission of gathering intelligence. BRTs and BLSPs are the only elements dedicated to the sole function of reporting intel first and fighting second. DIVCAV and ACRs are generally used in a recon by fire role and rarely remain idle to primarily collect on the enemy.

The RSTA Squadron concept consists of 18 M2's or Strykers with five to seven soldiers per vehicle. This capability gives the RSTA speed and flexibility, maximum protection, maximum dismount ability, and firepower to survive. As stated in the *RSTA IN THE UA* paragraph, the concept brings various ISR, radio, and unmanned equipment to increase its effectiveness on the battlefield, and given its manpower and vehicles, it will be able to execute multiple recon missions simultaneously for various units, organic or attached. In addition, the squadron has its own support company dedicated to each troop while they conduct their mission.

Capabilities.

Current Recon, based on its composition, is limited to how many missions it can conduct. DIVCAV and ACRs possess a great amount of capabilities to conduct multiple missions simultaneously. Unfortunately its firepower usually over-shadows its ability to perform reconnaissance and they are attached to a Corp or Division, which tasks them with offensive or defensive missions. The BRT and BLSP's have little capability to survive and emplace direct fire. Their recon missions are limited to space and time and can only report enemy formations up to the maximum range of the organic units indirect assets.

The RSTA Squadron possesses all the capabilities of the DIVCAV, ACRs, BRTs, and BLSPs. This allows for the RSTA to execute multiple missions simultaneously 360 degrees around its organic unit, well beyond the reach of their organic indirect assets.

Projection.

Projection is the ability for the unit to move from theater to theater and from one Area of Operation (AO) to another. Moving between theaters and AOs for current recon proves difficult do to the necessity of a higher headquarters (HHQ). With the exception of the ACR which operates doctrinally independent, DIVCAV, BRTs, and BLSPs need a HHQ in order to function appropriately. The RSTA Squadron needs no such support based on it modularity. One of the main reasons to develop the UA design was to project combat power without a HHQ having to coordinate and supervise. This fundamental principle not only exists with the UA, but with each maneuver element within.

As it stands, the current army recon is unable to fulfill the needs of today's battlefield. It is either too big to move or does not possess the firepower and protection to survive the current fight. Under the current redesign of the Army's BCTs, the RSTA provides an enormous advantage to the commander to maintain current intelligence, SU, and force protection. In addition, it is organic and under the direct control of the UA Commander. Instead of reporting to the commanders what they are fighting and how to defeat them, the RSTA squadron is trained and equipped on reporting to the commanders, not only what the enemy is and how to defeat them, but the enemy's COG, understanding the geo-political situation, dealing with different languages and dialects, and the employment of a myriad of sensor based technologies to collect and view the adversary, so that the Commander can place his forces in the right place at the right time with the right combat power to achieve the desired results.